

CHAPTER 2

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most important functions of the Independent Police Auditor (IPA) involves identifying patterns and trends that will serve as the basis for the recommendations made to the San José Police Department (SJPD). These patterns and trends are identified through analysis of the data extracted from citizen complaints. Some of the IPA recommendations result from a significant number of complaints alleging similar misconduct, while other recommendations are corollary to concerns raised in complaints but have a significant impact on the SJPD. Every year, the IPA selects certain issues to research and bring forth in the year-end reports published by this office.

In this report, the IPA focused on two issues: “Improvements Needed at the SJPD Information Center” and “Strategies in Recruitment and Retention.” The first issue addresses the need for customer service training and the

over crowding that exists at the SJPD Information Center. The second issue addresses the need to recruit and retain officers with excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE INFORMATION CENTER

INTRODUCTION

In both private and public service, the job of a front desk professional is anything but easy. Police officers assigned to work the front desk of the Information Center of the San José Police Department (SJPD) face personal and professional challenges every day. Front desk officers work in a stressful environment and deal with a wide range of people, from emotionally charged victims, to suspects, to visitors who are there merely for business purposes.

Front desk officers are required to meet the demands of multiple

duties, which include paperwork, phone calls, and walk-ins. That is a tall order to ask of any one person. Nevertheless, officers in charge of the front desk must carry out one of the most important duties in the police department in a courteous and helpful manner. Because officers assigned to work the front desk are the first person many visitors come in contact with, the impression these officers make has a major impact on the impression the public will have of the San José Police Department.

SELECTION PROCESS AND TRAINING

The police profession, for the most part, has not held the position of Desk Officer in high esteem, nor has it recognized that this position also requires specialized training and selection of officers who possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills. Most Desk Officers rarely receive positive reinforcement

from police peers or command staff and seldom do these officers receive letters of commendation from the public. On the contrary, in some police departments officers assigned to front desk duties are viewed unfavorably and have been referred to as the “House Mouse” and other derogatory names by police officers. The lack of status towards this assignment creates a training challenge in motivating Desk Officers to apply good customer service skills and techniques.

The San José Police Department (SJPD) has a bidding process for officers to request assignment to specialized units. Working the front desk is seldom a choice of most officers. The officers assigned to work the front desk at the police department include officers that have recently completed their probationary period but are often among the officers with the least experience. This is not a new officer’s choice of assignment since often their preference is to work on patrol. Desk Officers are allowed to work on patrol one day every other

week. Desk Officers do not receive incentive or premium pay as do other assignments such as MERGE or Motors.

Officers working the front desk receive a one-day combination training-orientation in interacting with people coming to the Information Center of the police department. Desk officers are not trained on the use of customer service techniques such as offering a greeting or asking how they can be of service. A nod or “next” followed by “what do you need” or “want” often greets people coming to the front desk of the San José Police Department.

Desk Officers need to be equipped with practical techniques on how to master the many critical responsibilities of that assignment including dealing with difficult people face to face and over the phone. It is imperative that officers be trained to maintain control even in the most stressful situations and to project a professional image for the San José Police Department.

DUTIES OF DESK OFFICER

The front desk is usually staffed with four officers, and one acts as the gatekeeper for those people requiring admittance into other units within the police department. All persons admitted beyond the front lobby are required to wear a name badge whether the person is a civilian or police officer. Civilians register at the front desk and their whereabouts are tracked through the use of a computer system. Desk Officers have to escort some people that require admittance into a unit in the interior of the police department.

Desk Officers take reports from victims on the phone or in person. They also do some follow-up investigation on those cases they intake. Desk Officers handle the processing of individuals, who come into the police department to surrender themselves for an outstanding warrant. Safety and maintaining peace in the lobby are also part of their duties. Should any altercations happen within the police department, these officers are the first to

respond. Desk Officers also inspect and sign off on "Fix-it" citations. Desk Officers also have collateral responsibilities such as staffing the Preprocessing Center, which is the place where people under arrest are processed prior to getting booked into the county jail.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The lobby of the police department is very crowded during most of the day, especially during high demand hours. Many times, there is nowhere to sit down. The temperature inside is hot, and the ventilation is poor. The same small lobby has to accommodate people doing business with the Records Division as well as people seeking a wide range of other services. Some of these services include annual registration by all sex offenders living in the City, pre-booking for people self-surrendering, obtaining copies of police and accident reports, victims filing police reports, permits for taxicabs and events, and stolen, towed, or recovered vehicles.

At times, people stand in line for twenty to thirty minutes only to find out that they were in the wrong line or that they missed the scheduled hours when the services they seek are provided. Sometimes the lobby is so crowded that it is necessary to have people wait outside because the lobby is over capacity. There is no access to public restrooms from the lobby, so it requires that Desk Officers facilitate access through the security gate. Having to wait outside the building, especially in bad weather, only exacerbates an already difficult situation. Another factor that contributes to conflict at the front desk is the lack of available parking near the police department. Visitor parking is extremely limited, causing people to park blocks away.

The Desk Officer's work area is very confined. A glass wall separates the officers and the people waiting in the lobby. This physical barrier, though necessary for security reasons, adds to the tendency to depersonalize the interaction between the desk

officers and the public. There is a small workstation located behind the area where the Desk Officers work. Officers use this area to write reports, do follow-up investigations, or take a break. Victims or witnesses coming to the police department to report a crime speak to the Desk Officers through the glass windows. There are no rooms available where a Desk Officer can take a victim's statement and where privacy can be provided especially for victims of certain crimes.

The sergeant assigned to supervise Desk Officers works in an office located away from the front lobby. Seldom is the Desk Sergeant within sight or hearing range of the Desk Officers because other collateral duties require that the Desk Sergeant be in another part of the building. Officers are sometimes seen seated behind the front desk window, reading the newspaper or talking on their cellular phones in what is or seems not business related. It is not readily apparent that the reason they are not helping customers is because

these officers are actually on their break. These actions can be misinterpreted and add to the frustration of those waiting in line. Staffing the Preprocessing Center takes precedence over the front desk; therefore, if the preprocessing center needs a Sergeant, the Desk Officers are left without a supervisor.



Desk officers work the same shifts as other officers in the police department, days, swing, and nights. The front desk of the police department is locked after midnight and people coming to the police department, needing service, have to use a courtesy phone located at the exterior of the building to contact the Desk Officer. The midnight Desk Officer is instructed not to allow entry to anyone; therefore, an outside patrol unit is called to provide service. Adding to a sense of isolation is the fact that there is only one officer assigned to work the midnight shift, and that officer is alone until 6:00 a.m., when the doors are unlocked.

According to the command staff,

Desk Officers have frequent opportunities to take breaks and are allowed to exercise in the police gym while on duty. It is not clear whether these break opportunities are consistent and are systematically provided, or if they are ad hoc and taken sporadically.

OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

After assessing the duties and work environment of Desk Officers, three areas were identified as needing improvement: Crowded conditions in the lobby, customer service, and work conditions for front desk officers.

The first obvious observation is

that the lobby is very crowded during high-demand hours, which are approximately between 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. every day. A person entering the lobby will see many lines formed that meander throughout the room. There is no clear indication of where a person is supposed to start, nor is there staff to ask basic questions before getting in line.

Desk Officers work in confined quarters, and the public waits for service in a very crowded lobby where convicted criminals can be found. Oftentimes, people wait for hours in the lobby of the police department. It is not uncommon to see families with small children waiting in the lobby. Alongside the families, sex offenders waiting

to register and suspects self-surrendering for minor or serious crimes also wait in the same confined area. The lobby is so small that designating an area where families can wait, away from sex offenders waiting to register, is not possible.

The conditions at the Information Center can be addressed by expanding the lobby area, using current space more efficiently, and by changing the operating procedures currently in place.

EXPANDING THE LOBBY

The size of the lobby poses a serious challenge in accommodating so many people into such a small area. Currently, there is no "Maximum Occupancy" posted; therefore, the maximum capacity of the lobby is unknown. As part of the seismic retrofit of the building, the SJPD is currently looking to expand the lobby area by expanding to include the overhang area. This area currently has some benches and is used as an outside waiting area. However during very cold or hot weather, this is not an adequate

waiting area nor are there sufficient seating accommodations.

Another suggestion is to increase the lobby by moving the Records Department service windows back and by relocating the paper files that are waiting to be converted to paperless files. Since this conversion process does not involve interaction with the public, it can be moved to a location away from the lobby. An example of where this is done is seen at the Building Department where their imaging/scanning section is located in another section of the building, away from the customer service area. This could add considerable space, which would



accommodate an expansion to the lobby, provide access to restrooms from the lobby, and private rooms for desk officers to use to conduct interviews with victims and witnesses.

The lobby currently has one row of seats that run along the wall and four rows parallel to the front doors. Also, there is one counter next to the front door where people can fill out forms. This counter has a service window to the Records Department, which is not currently used. Instead of having this counter and rows of seats, standing rails with small counters could be installed, similar to those used by banks, to fill out forms. Standing rails with counters that could take the place of some rows of seats would require less space.

In order to achieve any of these changes, an assessment of the physical layout of the front lobby and an estimate of the number of people coming to the front desk of the police department during peak hours must take place.

MODIFYING OPERATING PROCEDURES

Changing the operating procedures can help get visitors in and out faster. People entering the lobby need to be directed where to go. A receptionist at the entrance of the lobby is needed. That person can determine the nature of the service needed, can determine what window to go to, can provide information about the different schedules for certain services, or can send them on their way if their needs cannot be met there. There are many other uses for this position such as providing the extension numbers for people using the courtesy phones, assisting in disseminating police information, and even to do customer satisfaction surveys.

A receptionist could also be used to implement a numbering system. The numbers can be categorized into different series. For example, the 100 series can be for filing reports; the 200 series can be for sex registrants; the 300 series for those applying for permits; and so on. This system, called Q-Matic, is currently in

place in the Building Department. As soon as customers enter the Building Department, they go to the reception counter and get a number in a specific series according to the purpose of their visit – 100 for building, 200 for electrical, 300 for plumbing/mechanical, and 400 for commercial.

Years back, the San José Police Department had a civilian greeter that would perform some of the receptionist functions. However, since this was a volunteer position, when the volunteer left, the program ceased to exist. This greeter worked from a desk that was in the lobby, and his function was to greet people coming to the

police department. The greeter would direct people to the appropriate window reducing the frustration of waiting in the wrong line. The greeter would also act as a resource to answer basic questions such as whether their issue was within the jurisdiction of the San José Police Department. This kept the lobby less crowded.

A process that is in place, but needs to be evaluated, is the practice of directing people to the courtesy phones in the lobby. When people inform the Desk Officers that they are there to meet with an officer, the people are told to use a courtesy phone on the wall and to dial the extension of the unit or officer they are



looking for. There is only one courtesy phone to serve everyone, and often times people don't know the extension they need and there is no directory by the phone to refer to. If the courtesy phone is busy, there is no mandate that officers use their desk phones to assist the citizen in contacting their appointment, nor are Desk Officers compelled to provide them with a number.

If citizens come to the police department for a public meeting and the police coordinator does not inform the front desk, it creates a problem in identifying where the meeting is being held and whom to contact. Monitors in the lobby that display scheduled meetings, activities, or other services would assist the public and the desk officers to better coordinate the various functions taking place in the police department. The Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office uses such monitors.

Another operational change would be to have desks or workstations that are equipped with computers

and wired for internet use. People waiting in the lobby could perform such functions as filing electronic police reports, writing witness statements, filling out forms, or researching other city services and city websites. Waiting time for certain services can take as long as two hours. This would streamline the filing of reports and make the waiting less onerous.

Customer Service Training:

There are numerous communication and interpersonal skills that have been proven successful while working a customer service desk. For example:

- ◆ Communication skills to minimize conflict and reduce friction.
- ◆ Use of body language: Not being aware of how it is perceived can hurt one's credibility and image.
- ◆ Responding immediately to put visitors at ease, even when they have to wait.
- ◆ How to get your point across, even when talking to a person who is resistant, upset, or angry.

- ◆ Communication skills that will help to handle multiple calls with confidence and ease. Listening being the most effective communications skill.
- ◆ How to say no without causing resentment.
- ◆ Non-threatening responses to give when you are the target of verbal abuse.
- ◆ Polite and effective ways to encourage customers to get to the point.
- ◆ Phone finesse: Simple things to do to make the caller feel taken care of.
- ◆ Courtesy: Put yourself in the customer's place.

Safety: When considering the issue of safety, both the safety of the officers and the safety of the public need to be closely considered. Below are suggestions to address some of these issues:

- ◆ Designate an area in the lobby for families with children.
- ◆ Designate a separate waiting area for sex offenders waiting to register.

- ◆ Train officers how to project an image that commands respect without being offensive or alienating to the public, especially when dealing with difficult people and situations.
- ◆ Desk Officers need to employ skills that will help them remain calm even when events or others around them are out of control.
- ◆ It is important that clear guidelines be developed and implemented to address fights and arguments that break out in the lobby.
- ◆ Ongoing training should be part of the Desk Officer's safety and personal development.

Professional Development:

Making the job of a Desk Officer more fulfilling and challenging is the responsibility of the police administration. Below are some areas that should be considered.

- ◆ Organizing your time and environment for maximum efficiency.
- ◆ Using simple, practical

techniques to keep stress down and productivity high.

- ◆ Handling the role as gatekeeper with courtesy and efficiency.
- ◆ Ways to maintain high energy and enthusiasm throughout the shift.
- ◆ Creating an environment that supports the desk officer and represents the police department well.
- ◆ Methods to help officers achieve job satisfaction and enjoyment that will make their time on the job more fulfilling.
- ◆ Providing scheduled breaks and a place away from the front desk to take breaks.
- ◆ Provide better supervision, training, and incentives.
- ◆ Recognizing and holding in high esteem the assignment of Desk Officer by the police administration.

CONCLUSION

There are changes that can be immediately implemented while others will require further research. Changes that include customer service training, higher

recognition and appreciation of the duties of Desk Officers, alleviation of the crowded conditions in the lobby, closer supervision, and other streamlining ideas are needed at the Information Center. Improvements in these areas will lead to greater job satisfaction, provide a higher quality of service to the public, and improve the overall professionalism of the San José Police Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that a study be conducted to assess the feasibility of expanding the front lobby to alleviate the crowded conditions that currently exist.
2. It is recommended that a separate waiting area for designated services such as, sex offenders waiting to register, criminals waiting to self-surrender, and other people that would pose a threat to the safety of others waiting in the lobby.

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| <p>3. It is recommended that a room, for Desk Officers to take victim's statements in private, be made available.</p> | <p>customer service training be developed and that desk officers receive initial and ongoing training.</p> | <p>ing strong partnerships between the public and the police has led to making the City of San Jose the safest large city in the nation with the lowest crime rate. The</p> |
| <p>4. It is recommended that additional courtesy phones be installed in the lobby.</p> | <p>9. It is recommended that Information Center Sergeants have the front desk as their primary responsibility and that they be assigned office space where they can monitor the activities of the Information Center.</p> | <p>low crime rate does not mean that officers respond to fewer calls for service. On the contrary, in the year 2001, the San Jose Police Department recorded approximately 525,000 police contacts with citizens. This total includes all calls for service, and self-initiated contacts by police officers. Of the 525,000 citizen and police contacts, less than 5% resulted in an arrest. Over 95% of the contacts the police had with the public involved providing service-oriented functions.</p> |
| <p>5. It is recommended that monitors to display information such as activities, services, and meetings taking place in the Police Administration Building be installed in the lobby to assist the public and the Desk Officers.</p> | <p>10. It is recommended that the Chief of Police implement incentives to attract officers to work at the Information Center.</p> | <p></p> |
| <p>6. It is recommended that access to public restrooms be made available from the lobby, which will eliminate the need to sign-in with the desk officers, go through the security gate, and provide access to unsecured areas of the police department.</p> | <p><i>STRATEGIES IN RECRUITING AND RETENTION</i></p> <p><i>POLICING IS ABOUT PUBLIC SERVICE</i></p> <p>The City of San Jose, like many other cities across the country, established community or service-oriented policing which emphasizes communication and cooperation with citizens as well as informal problem solving. Foster-</p> | <p>Since the police spend approximately 95% of their time handling service related calls, it stands to reason that the San Jose Police Department (SJPD) recruit and hire officers with strong communication and interpersonal skills. It is a known observation that there is a direct correlation between officers who seldom generate citizen complaints, lawsuits or pre-lawsuit claims, with officers</p> |
| <p>7. It is recommended that a receptionist be placed in the lobby to provide services.</p> | <p></p> | <p></p> |
| <p>8. It is recommended that</p> | <p></p> | <p></p> |

possessing strong people skills. The SJPd strives to hire those officers who are in pursuit of service and not adventure.

Research conducted in the United States and internationally indicate that female officers utilize a style of policing that relies less on physical force and more on verbal skills.¹ According to studies conducted by the National Center for Women and Policing (NCWP), female officers are more successful at defusing potentially violent confrontations, and are less likely to become involved in the use of excessive force. Female officers often successfully resolve situations that might otherwise lead to allegations of excessive force, by using tactics and techniques that de-escalate potentially violent situations.²

In a study conducted by the Feminist Majority Foundation and NWCP, about the Rampart scandal, their study revealed that there was a significant gender gap in the cost of police brutality and misconduct as a result of civil liability against the Los Angeles

Police Department (LAPD). Male officers were involved in excessive-force and misconduct lawsuits at rates disproportionately higher than their female counterparts.³ The City of Los Angeles paid out at a rate of 23 to 1 for male officers vs. female offices even though the male to female ratio is 4 to 1 for the patrol division.⁴

More than ten years ago, the Christopher Commission⁵ recommended that the LAPD hire more women as a means of reducing police brutality. This recommendation, by the Christopher Commission, followed an already existing federal consent decree known as the Blake Decree which, set hiring goals for women, Hispanics and African-Americans.

The hiring steps described above were undertaken by the LAPD before the passage of Proposition 209 amended the California Constitution. Currently, any recruitment strategies or hiring efforts must comply with Proposition 209 and the California Constitution, which specifically

prohibits preferential treatment in public employment on the basis of gender. These changes in the law do not impact or preclude federal consent decrees because these federal actions are not vulnerable to changes in state law.

The IPA examined statistical data to assess whether there is any indication that less complaints result from enforcement actions taken by San Jose female officers, whether this is attributed to better communication skills, and how to attract a higher percentage of female applicants to the SJPd force.

METHODOLOGY

A review of all citizen complaints filed in the last five years was conducted. In addition the number and type of lawsuits and city claims were examined. Current recruiting policies, procedures, written materials, and approaches were studied. Promotional opportunities and retention programs were reviewed. In addition, interviews were conducted with selected mem-

bers of the San Jose Police Department. Recruiting and retention materials from other law enforcement agencies were also examined. The primary reference tool used to prepare this report was the publication entitled "Recruiting and Retaining Women," published by the National Center for Women & Policing (NCWP).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

An analysis of the information from citizen complaints was conducted for the last five years, 1997 through 2001. There was a total of 1379 complaints filed and of those only 5% were filed against female officers. Female officers comprise 9% of the San Jose Police Department. In the last five years, officers assigned to the Bureau of Field Operations generated almost 50% of all complaints. Nine percent of female officers are assigned to patrol. A further breakdown of those complaints revealed that of the 728 Unnecessary Force allegations, only 2% were filed against female officers. Of the

210 complaints that were sustained in the last five years, only 5% were sustained against female officers as compared to the 95% of complaints that were sustained against male officers.

Lawsuits filed against the City of San Jose, resulting from a police action, were examined. In the last three years, 1999 through 2001, there were 89 lawsuits that resulted from a police action. In 48 of the 89 lawsuits, where no particular officer was named, the City of San Jose and the San Jose Police Department were named as defendants. If the identity of the officer and gender was revealed at a later point in the proceedings, that information was not available to the IPA at the time of this study and therefore, was not part of this analysis. Of the remaining 41 lawsuits that did name an officer, 96% of these officers were male.

The IPA also examined all claims filed against the City of San Jose resulting from a police action. These claims are separate actions from lawsuits however,

some claims did result in subsequent lawsuits. For the two years of data reviewed, 2000 and 2001, there was a total of 78 claims. In 18 claims, no specific officer was named. Of the remaining 60 claims, there were 63 officers named and of those, only three were women.

The data above indicates that quantitatively, female officers generated fewer citizen complaints, fewer Unnecessary Use of Force allegations, were named less often in law suits, and were named less frequently in pre-lawsuit claims against the City of San Jose.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN IN POLICING

The role of women in law enforcement has experienced significant changes in the past thirty-five years. In 1968, the Indianapolis Police Department made history in the United States by assigning the first two female officers to patrol on an equal basis with their male colleagues.⁶ Prior to 1968, women in law enforcement had

been relegated to administrative duties.

A question that is still asked today, is whether women are strong and aggressive enough to do police work. Nationally, physical strength has played a significant role in the testing used to qualify women to become police officers. There are no known studies to conclude that physical strength is an indicator of whether an officer will successfully handle a dangerous situation or be more effective in handling high-risk calls.⁷ On the contrary, the ability to diffuse or de-escalate potential violence and to exhibit more reasoned caution may be greater indicators of an officer's ability to handle volatile and life threatening situations; but when force has been necessary, studies have shown that, women use force with the same frequency as men⁸.

Physical strength for women applying to the SJPD has not been a significant obstacle. It has been the endurance required in running a 1½ mile in 14 min-

utes that has eliminated approximately 50% of all female applicants. If the applicant fails the run, she would have to wait until the next cycle to apply again. This waiting period could be as long as one year. The SJPD does provide assistance with the testing process, which includes the physical agility test. The SJPD realizes that the extended waiting period is hampering their recruiting efforts and is therefore, exploring ways to shorten the waiting period.

UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN POLICING

The San Jose Police Department has made significant advances in recruiting, retaining, and promoting women in the last ten years. The leadership of the San Jose Police Department is committed and receptive to increasing the number of female officers. There is a total of 132 female officers and approximately 11% are part of the command staff. Currently, there are nine Sergeants, four Lieutenants, and one Deputy Chief serving in the San Jose

Police Department. Two of the three department recruiters are women.

Even with all these efforts, representation of women in the San Jose Police Department (SJPD) is still low. The optimal goal would be to have the percentage of female officers mirror the female workforce of the County of Santa Clara which, is 46%.⁹ Women comprise 9% of the total police force and in the past five years the percentage of women in the SJPD has only increased by 1%. Nationwide, women average between 13% and 15% of sworn law enforcement personnel in cities of over 100,000 population.¹⁰ Studies like the "New Workplace for Women Project", a program funded by the U. S. Department of Labor, have conducted research to help cities address this issue. Some police departments that participated in this project significantly increased the number of female officers. For example, in the Albuquerque Police Department the percentage of female recruits increased from 10 to 25%, and they were re-

tained at the same rate as their male counterparts.¹¹ In the Tucson Police Department, the number of female recruits increased from 10% to 29% in two classes.¹²

In the Bay Area, efforts to recruit qualified candidates, either men or women, reached a crisis low during the time that the economy peaked in the year 2000. Some police departments offered cash sign-up bonuses, starting salaries of over \$50,000, and other incentives. Police departments also recruited competitively from other law enforcement agencies.

Female applicants, for the last decade, have been aggressively sought by the SJPd and by most municipal and county law enforcement agencies. The low number of female officers in the SJPd is not reflective of a lack of desire or effort to hire women. Therefore, additional strategies to supplement existing policies may yield an increase in the percentage of women at the SJPd.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Traditional recruiting efforts in most law enforcement agencies have not been successful in hiring and retaining women in significant numbers in comparison to the number of women in the workforce. In contrast, women in other traditionally male dominated professions, like medicine and law, have made greater inroads in the past decade. In a study conducted in 1997, the data revealed that 43 percent of students in top-tier medical schools and 44 percent in law schools were women.¹³

Traditional recruitment strategies throughout the country have failed to emphasize those areas that are of particular concern to women such as mentoring, support groups, acceptance by their male colleagues, opportunities for advancement, and maternity-family leave related issues. Organizations like the Feminist Majority Foundation and the National Center for Women & Policing (NCWP) under the direction of retired Chief Penny E. Harrington, have spent many

years studying and creating comprehensive tools to address the recruitment, hiring, and retention of policewomen. Just a few of the many strategies recommended by the NCWP are examined below in the areas of recruitment and retention.

EVALUATING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

The internet is becoming the leading medium by which law enforcement agencies disseminate recruiting information. A review of the job descriptions posted on the internet by several law enforcement agencies including the San Jose Police Department, Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, San Francisco Police Department, Oakland Police Department, California Highway Patrol, San Diego Police Department, and Los Angeles Sheriff's Office, revealed that they all list similar requirements such as:

- ◆ The minimum educational requirements,
- ◆ Possession of a valid CA

Driver's License,

- ◆ Eligible age range,
- ◆ No felony convictions,
- ◆ U.S. Citizenship.

Of the above listed law enforcement agencies, only the San Diego Police Department incorporated in its job description other dimensions suggested by the Peace Officers Standards & Training (POST) such as: Interest in people, interpersonal sensitivity, communication skills, problem solving ability, good judgment under pressure, integrity, and credibility as a witness.

According to the National Center for Women & Policing, the key to developing the best job description for the position of a law enforcement officer, is to emphasize the value the organization places on community policing and detail the skills and duties required to successfully implement community policing. Examples of duties to include in preparing police job descriptions are conflict resolution, ability to de-escalate violent situations, ability to mediate disputes, ability

to communicate with diverse community members, ability to develop solutions for crime and community based problems, and ability to empathize with people holding different beliefs. These are in addition to law enforcement duties such as traffic control, response to crimes, and testifying in court. All skills necessary to further the mission and implementation of community policing should be part of the job description.

DESIGNING RECRUITMENT BROCHURES AND POSTERS

In selecting the themes and messages to include in recruiting brochures and posters, law enforcement agencies need to highlight those under-represented groups in order to increase the number of applicants.

A review of the recruiting material available on the Internet from the law enforcement agencies previously listed revealed that only the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office and the California Highway Patrol prominently display photos of

policewomen working in a variety of assignments including the following: bicycle, motorcycle, mounted, air, patrol, and other units. Women in these departments are also shown in fashionable poses wearing street clothes.

None of the agencies reviewed had brochures or posters depicting women in fundamental roles such as: mother, wife, athlete, and/or community volunteer. How these roles integrate with police work is a central issue that needs to be addressed. Obvious questions and concerns that many women have include the effect of maternity and/or family leave on retention and advancement opportunities. What policies, expressed or implied, are in place to address marriages within the same department? Is job sharing available? To address these types of questions and concerns, the Michigan State Police printed some very effective posters. For example, in a poster titled "Protecting your Family and Ours," a husband and wife are depicted in their state trooper

uniforms with their young son and their canine. In another poster titled, "Trooper.Wife.Mother," a woman is photographed in each of these three roles. These posters acknowledge the importance of family and the reality that many officers have spouses working in the same profession and/or the same law enforcement agency.

PROMOTIONAL ADVANCEMENT FOR WOMEN

While men and women join the police department for similar reasons, the reasons for leaving may be different. The reasons female officers leave may be due to family related issues such as the birth of a child, childcare problems, shift work, and challenges with children entering school. While family related challenges are not exclusive to women, the impact is greater to an already small pool of female officers.

Providing promotional opportunities for groups that are represented in small numbers in a police department is very impor-

tant to the advancement and retention of those officers. Policies should be in place to ensure that officers are not leaving the SJPD because of a lack of opportunity for assignment into specialized units. Specialty units offer new challenges and experiences that expand the scope of an officer's background and which directly impact promotional opportunities. Currently, 11% of SJPD female officers hold a rank of Sergeant and above.

A concern expressed by some sergeants is that there is no written mandate that openings, for sergeants into specialized units, be posted or open to all qualified candidates. While the San Jose Police Department's Sergeant Transfer Policy does not explicitly require that openings be formally announced, the police department for years has encouraged a practice consistent with the transfer policy for officers that does require posting. The goal is to make assignments to all units open, accessible and gender neutral.

With a police department the size of the SJPD, it is possible that officers could rise through the ranks and never be exposed to a significant number of Sergeants. It is logical that Unit Commanders would be inclined to select those Sergeants with whom they are familiar. While female sergeants have worked in a number of specialized units, the goal should be to eventually have female sergeants also assigned to units such as Gang Investigations, High Tech, Training, Metro, VCET, Auto Theft, and Canine Unit.

In order to avoid a perception that there is a systematic exclusion of qualified candidates, the department should address the following: how job openings are posted, the application process, how to expose all sergeants to different unit commanders, how to increase the pool of eligible candidates, and how to ensure that all candidates are fairly considered for the assignments.

CONCLUSION

Statistical data analyzed by the IPA revealed that, in proportion to the number of female officers represented in the SJPd, female officers received significantly fewer citizen complaints and had less complaints sustained against them. Female officers had less allegations of using excessive force. In addition, female officers were named less frequently in lawsuits, and generated fewer pre-lawsuit claims. With the limited research conducted by the IPA, it cannot be concluded that the low number of complaints and lawsuits generated by female officers is based on gender. However, in assessing the totality of the research and the data collected, there is a baseline of information from which to infer that female officers at the SJPd may have used a more conciliatory approach to policing and may possess a higher degree of communication and interpersonal skills.

In addition, ongoing training for all officers to better develop their communication skills, which is

also known as perishable skills, is recommended. Emphasis in communication and interpersonal skills is intended to augment officer safety training because it must be acknowledged that there are those calls police officers respond to where no degree of communication skills will peacefully resolve the situation. In the Independent Police Auditor's (IPA) 1999 Year End Report, the Auditor recommended that the SJPd provide training to improve officer's basic, day to day communication skills. A pattern that was detected in analyzing citizen complaints was that the genesis of the complaint was attributed to a breakdown in communications between the officer and the citizen. A two-hour "Tactical Communication" class was designed for the purpose of improving the officer's approach and interaction with the public. All officers, including command staff, attended this training which, has now been adopted as part of the continuing professional training.

The information reviewed also

found that the department has made, over the past several years, ongoing improvements to its recruiting efforts and is currently working to further refine those efforts. Some targeted efforts, however, have been precluded by recent changes in the law restricting affirmative action practices. Still, the success rate of community policing can be increased by incorporating additional approaches to policing such as practicing a more conciliatory, less aggressive style of policing. The changes advocated above and the recommendations below, in recruitment and retention policies, are not intended to establish preferential treatment for women. Rather, these changes simply make sure women are included in all phases of recruitment in order to increase the quality and quantity of SJPd applicants. Similarly, the retention recommendation will improve the work-life and work atmosphere for all officers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop job descriptions that also include those skills necessary to effectively implement community policing such as communication, conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills.
2. Design and implement recruiting strategies that address family related issues.
3. Revise the policies governing sergeant transfer opportunities to require that openings be posted, and that the application and selection process provide all candidates a fair opportunity to be selected for the assignment.
4. Continue to develop and provide training in communication and interpersonal skills.

END NOTES

¹ National Center for Women and Policing

² Men, Women, and Excessive Force: A Tale of Two Genders, Dr. Kimberly A. Lonsway.

³ Los Angeles Times, October 2, 2000, "More Women in the Ranks Would Stem LAPD Brutality"

⁴ Men, Women, and Excessive Force: A Tale of Two Genders, Dr. Kimberly A. Lonsway.

⁵ The Christopher Commission was appointed to investigate allegations of police brutality by the LAPD following the Rodney King incident. This commission analyzed all of the use of force reports, citizen's complaints, and lawsuits involving excessive force against the LAPD.

⁶ Dorothy Moses Schulz, From Social Worker To Crime Fighter: Women in United States Municipal Policing (Praeger Publishers, 1995)

⁷ NCWP

⁸ NCWP

⁹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 4B.

¹⁰ NCWP

¹¹ Joseph Polisar and Donna Milgram, "Recruiting, Integrating, and Retaining Women Police Officers: Strategies that Work," The Police Chief, October 1998, 42-53.

¹² "Recruiting Women to Policing, Strategies that Work", www.iwitts.com/html/recruitment.htm

¹³ "Where are the women?", www.jobcircle.com